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TRANSNATIONAL CRIME AND SECURITY THREATS IN INDONESIA

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TRANSNATIONAL CRIME AND SECURITY THREATS IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

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Transnational crime is a growing global problem, with crimes like illegal fishing, logging, immigration, smuggling, narcotics trading and piracy posing significant security problems. The rise of non-state actors and technological advancement, coupled with globalization are key issues contributing to transnational crime. Indonesia, comprised of over 200 million inhabitants and more than 17,000 islands, is located in a key geostrategic position between the Indian and Pacific oceans and numerous countries. As such, Indonesia is fertile ground for transnational crime, and must strive to counter and overcome the threats posed by it. This paper will analyze the causes and intensity of transnational threats in Indonesia, its effect on Indonesia's security and its global impact, and present recommendations to counter and eradicate such crimes.

TRANSNATIONAL CRIME AND SECURITY THREATS IN INDONESIA

Introduction

Transnational crime is not a new phenomenon, but its sophistication increases from day to day and criminal activities are considered serious threats to nation states and require special handling. The challenges of today are not restricted to national crime on a small scale, but also include transnational crime on a large scale with the use of modern equipment and arms by non-state actors and terrorists groups. The increasing number of transnational crime groups is affected by many factors. Regional security situations, socio-economic conditions, religious extremism, and insecurity are significant causes increasing transnational crime and terrorist groups.

Indonesia as an archipelagic country situated between the Asia mainland and Australia, and the India Ocean and the Pacific Ocean enjoys a geostrategic position. At the same time, Indonesia as a developing country also faces challenges in safeguarding itself from transnational crime and terrorism. "The Malacca strait remains the focus of the international communities, as the volume of international trade traffic passing through these waters tends to increase."[1] The effect is, criminal incidents have been broadening in the Malacca strait region and from time to time the security issue in the Malacca Strait becomes more complex. The unoccupied border and outermost small islands can also be fertile ground for transnational crime or terrorist groups to enter or exit Indonesia.

Indonesia is a nation populated by more than 300 ethnic groups and is characterized by a highly pluralistic society. "This condition has implications on security which can be categorized as national, provincial or local scale."[2] "These transnational

criminal threats have created significant disadvantages for Indonesia. Therefore,

combating transnational threats became a priority for Indonesia by using domestic

resources, and cooperating with friendly countries."[3] This paper will describe factors of

transnational crime and terrorism, specific problems of transnational crime and security

threats, and Indonesian perspectives on the subject.

<u>The compelling factors of transnational crime and terrorism in Indonesia</u>

      The increasing amount of transnational criminal groups is affected by many

factors. Regional security situations, socio-economic conditions, religious extremism,

insecurity, and support by globalization and technology have helped create these

groups.

      Regional security situation. In Southeast Asia and its surroundings, despite the

relatively calm tension extant in the overlapping claims regarding borders in the South

China Sea, this dispute still has the potential to affect countries in the region. Apart

from potential inter-state conflict, other dominant issues are vertical and horizontal

domestic conflicts in some countries in the Southeast Asian region. Transnational

security threats including terrorism, armed robbery, piracy, and illegal fishing are

currently emerging.

      In addition, there are also internal ethno-religious based conflicts, separatism,

and anarchic radicalism in a number of countries in the region and its surroundings.

Indonesia is situated in a region experiencing security disturbances, and their spill-over,

such as refugees, arms smuggling and illegal border crossings may disrupt Indonesia`s

security.[4]

Religious Extremism. "The radicals are limited in number. They do not have any affiliations with the largest Muslim organizations-mainstream Muslim organizations. In fact, they do not have any connections with Muslim political parties. But the problem is that these limited number of radicals or hard-liners are very vocal and militant. They are very active and sometimes they resort to violence."[5]

Although the radical strain is not dominant in Indonesia, much of the country`s population is ambivalent about radical fundamentalists, tacitly allowing them sanctuary in what is often referred to as the most populous Islamic nation in the world. While recent fundamental radicalism appears to be a new development, it is actually rooted in long-standing strains of religious fundamentalism and radicalism. The identities coalescing around these forms of religion, which also have well-known global origins, have already been locally constructed over decades and show great variation among Indonesia`s Provinces. For example, the Darul Islam (the Abode of Islam) movements in Aceh, South Sulawesi, and West Java from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s were ideologically similar to the Salafism in the Middle East.[6]

> Unilateral and unbalanced approaches to security issues have often become the impetus for the emergence of radical movements. In their development, these movements are often exploited by separatist and terrorist groups to commit crimes or acts of anarchism.[7]

Socio-economic. Socio-economic grievances such as lack of development and low standards of living in the country can be a seed of the crime and conflict. "As far as drivers of conflict are concerned, one of the most robust findings in the literature is that many economic conditions (low income, slow growth, and especially severe economic downturns) are correlated with the outbreak of conflict, with some evidence strongly suggesting that causal direction runs from economic conditions to conflict."[8]

In reality, the effect of conflict can put a country at economic risk. Conflict can affect the business climate and keep a country from securing long term return investments in health and education. "One significant country risk is the possibility of violent political conflict, where the outbreak of violence between an opposition group and a government can affect the business climate. The effect of violence can result in the loss of physical assets, displacement of staff and markets, disruption to supply chains, loss of autonomy due to political upheavals, and an uncertain business environment long after conflict has terminated."[9] "A country with low levels of human development have more difficulty in improving institutions and in increasing productivity and growth. In turn, lower growth rates are strongly associated with the risk of conflict in developing countries."[10] Indonesia, as a developing country, with high population and low growth rates has an increased risk of crime.

Insecurity. Indonesia as an archipelagic country situated between Asia and Australia, and the India Ocean and to Pacific Ocean, faces challenges in safeguarding itself from transnational crime and terrorism. The position of the Malacca strait and the unoccupied border of Borneo, Sulawesi waters and the outermost small islands are difficult to police effectively against the perpetuation of terrorism and transnational crime. This problem is mainly due to a lack of high technology weapons and equipment and their associated implications on security.

> Countries across the region have long, porous borders that are impossible to police effectively against the infiltration of terrorism and transnational crime. Strategies to reduce incidences need to be formulated and implemented both bilaterally and multi-laterally. There are examples of working arrangements within the region that could be further developed to cover wider membership such as the East African Community and the Kenya/Ethiopia joint inter-ministerial border commission. Where such

arrangements have been successful, they should be emulated and further strengthened.[11]

The affect of globalization and technology. Improvement in technology has many benefits. On the other hand, the improvement of technology has created new security issues. Today, the utilization of communication has been demonstrated all over the world, even by individual combatants and non combatants. Coordination and control between crime groups and terrorist groups in many separate areas has been made easy.

Globalization offers criminal and terrorist groups more effective means to operate seamlessly across borders to take advantage of opportunities to make money and attack what they oppose. Advances in information and communications technology enable secure, costless, instantaneous transnational networking. "Globalization also provides high volume cross-border flows of people, commodities and money within which terrorist and criminals can camouflage their transnational transactions.[12]

Often the most dangerous transnational flows are not people or goods but information-be it the inspiration to carry out a terrorist act and the design of a bomb, or methamphetamine recipes, or tips about the best locations for a pedophile to operate with impunity. Increasing migration has facilitated the development of cross-border social networks that can be activated for criminal or transnationalization of grievances and the greater awareness of criminal or terrorist opportunities that exist across borders.[13]

The Specific problem of transnational crime and security threats in Indonesia

Transnational crime operates in varieties of activities, which make it difficult to capture their complete makeup. Indonesia`s problem of transnational crime stems from

different problems such as illicit drug production and smuggling, violent religious

radicalism/international terrorism, piracy, illegal arms trafficking, and illegal resources

exploitation.

   Illicit Drug Production and Smuggling. The production and smuggling of illicit

drugs has long been a major concern in Indonesia. Research on the drug problem

shows that both the supplier and user are internationally linked. It has been declared by

the police that Indonesia is no longer just a consumer of drugs, but a producer as well.

In comparison with the government attitude toward Small Arms and Light weapons

(SALW), the drug problem in Indonesia has been declared more dangerous as a

security theat. Drug problems remain one of the immense challenges of the country and

constitutes a serious threat to the health, safety and well-being of the people. It

undermines development, including efforts to reduce poverty, and threatens the national

security as well as the dignity and hope of millions of our young people and their

families. The global trends of the drug problem show a steady increase over time. Since

the drug problem in Indonesia is not stand alone, and is connected to a global crime

network, there is good reason to fear a growing threat from drugs.[14]

   Among various aspects of transnational crimes, however, illicit drug trafficking is

arguably the most significant and pernicious, not only because of its profits gained, but

also for its illegal activity resulting in significant collateral violence and destruction of

human health. In fact, since the economic crisis hit the country it is reported that

Indonesia has become a destination for drug dealers. Even in a conflict region such as

Aceh for example, it is widely famous as a source of narco-economic activity. This

reality, in conjunction with the proliferation of SALW, risks fueling the violent separatist

movement in Aceh. In the latest discourse, transnational crime is considered a major threat to security as there is a nexus between criminal activities and terrorism.[15]

Violent Religious Radicalism. Violent religious radicalism and separatism in South Asia have a major capacity to disrupt economic development and societal stability in the region. Many current and future perpetrators are deeply embedded within local communities across the region, and recent surveys reveal that up to 10% of Indonesian support jihad violence. Terrorist attacks in places such as Bali have had ongoing economic consequences, while the cycles of violence in the southern Philippines and southern Thailand are key contributors to those regions' continuing economic marginalization. There are strands within extremist thinking that specifically target the representatives of globalization and modernization in regional economies. Terrorism, by its very nature, seeks to erode the bonds of social trust that underpin societal stability and function.[16]

The recent acts of terrorism on the JW Marriot hotel and the Ritz Carlton hotel in Jakarta have brought Indonesia into the world spotlight. They claimed 9 lives (six foreigners) and injured 50. These incidents demonstrate the continuing danger posed by radical violent terrorist groups in Indonesia. Radical thinking as the root of terrorism in Indonesia has been fused by a number of internal and global environment influences.[17] The explosions in the two Jakarta hotels were caused by suicide bombs and the methods used bore many similarities to previous Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) attacks. The bomb-making methods and the nature of the attacks indicated that they were the work of Noordin M Top. [18]

At last, the most wanted fugitive terrorist mastermind-Noordin M Top together with two other fugitives (Bagus Budi Pranoto alias Urwah, Aryo Sudarso alias Aji) were shot dead in Solo, Central Java by special detachment troop 88 of the Indonesia National Police on Thursday, 17 September 2009. Noordin M Top has been the most wanted Terrorist in Indonesia for nine years. The certainty of his death is known after the Indonesia Police matched Noordin's fingerprints and DNA.[19]

Although JI`s current membership is unknown, recent activities in Indonesia indicate that the organization retains a committed membership, spread across the Indonesian archipelago from Aceh to Flores. The fact remains that JI's focus is on jihad and on the use of military tactics to achieve its objective of establishing a community where Islamic law can be practiced. JI believes fundamentally that non-Muslims, Muslim apostates and other anti-Islamic forces seek to destroy Islam and will have to be confronted with physical force if a true Islamic community is to be established.[20] That confrontation can also help expand the mass base. In this respect, many JI leaders saw ongoing jihad areas like Poso Central in Sulawesi, South Sumatra, Nusa Tenggara, and some areas in central Java as beneficial, although there is nothing to suggest that the Mumbai attacks and Gaza War Issues had any recruitment value.[21]

Arms Smuggling. Among the crucial problems in transnational crime is the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. "The illicit trade in small arms in the Southeast Asian region has contributed significantly to the arsenal of secessionist movements and warring factions in sectarian clashes in Indonesia, enough to prolong the duration of conflicts. Arms procured illegally from the regions hotspots have changed the balance of power among conflicting groups in Indonesia. The same is true for

conflicting groups in sectarian clashes in Poso, Central Sulawesi, and Ambon, Maluku. The sprawling geographic characteristic of the region and porous borders among Southeast Asian countries account for easy entrance of smuggled firearms originating from Cambodia, Thailand, and the Northern Philippines."[22]

In Indonesian context, Small Arms and Light Weapons issues such as arms smuggling or illicit small arms trafficking pose serious threats in many ways. First, rebellion groups working against the legitimate government may use it, such as the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), which relies on illegal weapon smuggling. Second, the proliferation of weapons also promotes deadly criminal activities including murder. Third, small arms have contributed in promoting violent communal conflicts such as in Ambon, Maluku, and Poso in Central Sulawesi.[23]

The archipelagic nature of Indonesia greatly increases the difficulty in effectively policing against the movement of terrorists and arms smuggling. The main problem is due to a lack of high technology weapons and equipment. However, the security apparatus that does exist is not doing enough to combat the illegal use and possession of small arms in public.

Piracy and Violent Robbery. A combination of geographic factors, historical traditions and new opportunities have made Southeast Asia a centre for maritime piracy, kidnapping and extortion. Over half of all maritime commerce passes through or near the Indonesian and the Philippines archipelagos, while the region's climate and cultures have also made it highly attractive to leisure activities. Piracy has been a traditional way of life for some local communities across the archipelagos, and continues to offer lucrative rewards in an environment increasingly rich in targets.[24]

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The problems of piracy have long been endemic in Southeast Asia maritime countries, including Indonesia. Piracy in the Strait of Malacca has historically been an unresolved threat to ship owners and the mariners who use the 900km-long (550 mile) sea lane. In recent years however, coordinated patrols by Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, along with increased security on vessels have sparked a dramatic downturn in piracy according to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB).[25]

The geography in the Strait of Malacca makes the region very susceptible to piracy. It is an important passageway used heavily for commercial trade. The Strait is on the route between Europe, the Suez Canal, and the oil-exporting countries of the Persian Gulf, and the busy ports of East Asia. The Strait is narrow, contains thousands of islets, and is an outlet for many rivers, making it an ideal location for pirates to hide and evade capture.[26]

According to the IMB, the majority of modern pirates in the region are of Indonesian origin. Of the countries in the region, Indonesia's navy is least equipped to combat piracy. Instances of modern piracy typically fall under one of three categories: pirates looking for easy profits, pirates working with or belonging to organized crime syndicates, or pirates associated with terrorist or secessionist groups with political motivations.[27]

Illegal Resources Exploitation. The East Asia and Southeast Asia regions both suffer from the illegal exploitation of natural resources and host a large number of enterprises, both licit and illegal, that are the perpetrators of resource exploitation in other regions, such as the South Pacific. The indicators are that resource exploitation is rising, though figures are unreliable.   Indonesia, for instance, has the second largest

rate of deforestation globally, comprising 14.53% of annual global deforestation. Myanmar is fourth with 3.62%, Cambodia is fourteenth with 1.7% and the Philippines eighteenth with 1.22%.[28]

Many types of this illegal resource exploitation are troubling from an environmental sustainability perspective. A range wildlife are facing extinction, while logging leads to major issues of deforestation, soil degradation and erosion, global warming, and the creation of haze from burning forest and peat matter in Indonesia. These activities, along with illegal fishing, have negative impacts on the future viability of local communities, and particularly indigenous groups. These crimes can have significant localized impacts on the economic viability and societal stability of broad communities in some regional countries.[29]

Indonesia Perspective

Soeharto Era (1966-1998). The New Order`s regime of President Soeharto had systematically designed security programs encompassing all aspects of political and social life. So that control of the people could be conducted effectively all elements of security were included in a framework of comprehensive security. Under this so-called comprehensive security, the concept encompassed the term IPOLEKSOSBUDHANKAMNAS as an abbreviation of (I : Ideology, POL : politics, SOS : social, BUD : budaya = culture, HAN : pertahanan = defence, KAM : keamanan = security, NAS : nasional = national) included the reference tools for the state to define a security balance. In this sense, the idea of comprehensive security had been hijacked to sustain the power and security interests for regime maintenance. The problem with securitization during the New Order was located on power relationships and the ABRI

(military/TNI and POLRI/police) were exploited to support the regime and play as political actors as well.[30]

During the Soeharto era, the military had a *dual function,* first to preserve and enforce internal and external security and sovereignty of the state, and second to serve as overseer and arbiter of government policy. This was used to justify substantial military interference in politics. Long time president Soeharto was an army general and was strongly supported by most of the military. Traditionally a significant number of cabinet members had military backgrounds, while active duty and retired military personal occupied a large number of seats in the legislature. Commanders of the various territorial commands played influential roles in the affairs of respective regions.

Post Soeharto Era (1998-2004.) The fall of President Soeharto after more than three decades in power and the following liberalization and democratization era (reformation era), has brought momentum to the rise of radical Muslim groups, or at least they are becoming more visible, assertive and vocal in voicing their ideals. Many of them are new. However, it is interesting to note that leaders of Arab origin are at the helm of these groups. These groups insist that Muslims should practice pristine Islamism as practiced by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. They attacked bars, discos and other places they considered as *places of vice.* Within this kind of Islamic worldview they understand the concept of *jihad* as holy war against those they consider enemies of Islam. In fact it is not necessarily that all radical groups desire an Islamic state of Indonesia. Some of them agree that Indonesia is a country for all. The only thing that they emphasize is that Muslims, as the majority, have a right to be treated as such. They perceive the Muslim majority as having been treated unfairly

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during the New Order regime. Part of the right they demand is the implementation of

Islamic Law (Shariah).[31]

In this era, police were separated from ABRI (effective from 1999). This move

also marked the changing of the military`s name from ABRI to TNI. The police would be

responsible for internal security only, and no longer would be involved in defense, which

became the full responsibility of the military. At the national level, there is the existing

problem in defining security responsibilities between the armed forces and the police

and to agree on internal/external roles. The black and white separation between

defense for the military and security for the police creates an uneasiness in discussing

security responsibilities. Security has a meaning of internal security that relates to law

enforcement and public order. In this context, the police have jurisdiction for handling

problems under the umbrella of criminalization. Consequently, the police claim that all

internal security issues are their responsibility, while the military is only responsible for

external defense. This also led to a conflict between police and the navy in securing the

water, since the police claim that it is their role to enforce the law in the sea.[32]

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) Era, Present President. The stabilization of

rule in Indonesia under the Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono government has brought an

end to the violent communal conflict in eastern Indonesia, resulted in a peace

agreement in Aceh, enhanced state effectiveness, and fostered a growing public

respect for law and order, and new reconciliation between Indonesian nationalism and

Islamic identity. All of these improvements have drained support from radical Islamism.[33]

During the SBY era, the military was placed under the Defense Ministry to emphasize

that politicians are the policymakers, and to ensure the military is not used for any

political purposes. Dealing with transnational threats has become the priority for

Indonesia by using domestic resources, cooperation with friendly countries, and the

legal process in making this a law-enforcement issue, not a military one.

　　Regional Cooperation Against transnational crime. The role of the Association of

Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is crucial as a regional level forum to strengthen the

response to the SALW. ASEAN has released its decree on the ASEAN Plan of Action

(PoA) to combat transnational crime that covers the subject of illegal SALW. In

addition, the Indonesian government has made a commitment to introduce tougher

control measures in their territory with regard to arms trafficking.[34]

Conclusion

　　Indonesia benefits greatly from it geostrategic position in the world. On the other

hand, Indonesia also faces challenges in safeguarding against transnational crime and

terrorism. The position of the Malacca strait, unoccupied border areas, and the

outermost small islands create serious implications for security.

　　Transnational organized crime is the most complicated aspect that challenges

future Indonesian security. Illicit drug trafficking is arguably the most significant and

pernicious, not only because of its profits gained, but also for its illegal activity resulting

in significant collateral violence and destruction of human health. The proliferation of

SALW risks fueling the violent separatist movement. In the latest discourse,

transnational crime is considered a major threat to security as there is nexus between

the criminal activities and terrorism.[35]

　　The availability of small arms in the conflicting regions show that organized crime

benefits from the SALW business-a chain of networks of arms supply. The network of

arms trafficking is the most difficult one to prove and is the responsibility of the security

apparatus to defeat. The crime network is not just local but also international.   Some

sources believe that the network route runs from Cambodia to Southern Philippines to

Malaysia then enters Indonesia.[36]

Eradicating crime and terrorism is very complex and thus needs great effort. It

has to touch the root causes of poverty, ignorance, backwardness, and ideological

radicalism. Having said that, combating terrorism has to be perceived as part of a

comprehensive effort in the war against multi-dimensional insecurity involving the

eradication of poverty, environmental degradation, pandemics, ignorance and

alienation.[37]

Transnational crime and terrorism have strong links to international and domestic

networks, and improve daily as a dark side of globalization and technology

improvement. Therefore, dealing with transnational threats must use not only domestic

resources but also cooperation with friendly countries.

Recommendation

Dealing with transnational crime and terrorism can use military resources as well

as police. The benefits of using military resources include: ease in organizing, operating

and controlling, since the military is well organized and trained. But using military

resources also has many disadvantages. The risk of using military resources may

endanger the population and damage infrastructure, and can increase the number of

opponents or new non-state armed groups. Although the military can destroy enemy

forces, the result may not be satisfactory if the root cause of the conflict is not

addressed. Although the quality and quantity of technology prevails, it does not

guarantee victory in this type of warfare. The enemy will resort to asymmetrical warfare,

fighting high-technology with low-technology instruments of terror or sabotage. So the military strategy must be adjusted in order to deal with terrorism.

Eradicating crime and terrorism is very complex and requires great effort. It must address the root causes: poverty, ignorance, backwardness, and ideological radicalism. So, dealing with transnational crime and terrorism by using an inter-agency, response is necessary. Having said that, the management of transnational crime and terrorism has to be perceived as part of the comprehensive effort of the nation.

A comprehensive interagency approach is required, with the military being but one part of the response. Dealing with Religious extremism requires communication and the right approach. Using an interagency approach increases effectiveness and the chances of success. Consequently, this option requires close coordination and communication amongst the various agencies.

An interagency response is the only one that can limit transnational crime and terrorism in Indonesia. Support via cooperation with friendly countries, diplomacy and dialogue are necessary to place the opponents at a true disadvantage. Through greater cooperation within Indonesia government agencies, and externally with partner nations, transnational crime and terrorism can be defeated.

<u>Endnote</u>

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